

A tenderfoot in southern California, by Mina Deane Halsey

A TENDERFOOT

IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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BY

MINA DEANE HALSEY

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This is an autograph edition of "A Tenderfoot in Southern California," the number of this copy being.....

TO GENE

And to the thousands of Angels (without wings) who are contentedly floating through life out in God's country, and to the thousands who live in hopes of some day doing likewise, I dedicate this little book.

FOREWORD

Much has been written about California, and Southern California in particular, as the native or the average citizen sees it. To the tourist, spending the winter in this garden spot, many little occurrences happen daily, that pass unnoticed by those living here, and to this end, this small volume is offered in memory of the many joys and trials combined, experienced by one of the ever-present Tenderfeet.

THE AUTHOR.

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"I staked out a 'mountain canary' to bring you for a souvenir, Bill, but I never could get near enough to the ornery cuss again, to untie him."

A FLEA BITTEN TENDERFOOT

13

CHAPTER I

WHEN I came out to California, Bill, some blamed idiot who knew it all, advised me what to bring.

He said—(and I'll bet my old pair of suspenders he never *saw* California) says he,

“Don't take any winter clothes out there with you, its such a hot country you wont need 'em.”

Wall, I didnt, and by gum, I like to froze to death.

14

All I had in that blamed trunk of mine was some peek-a-boo underwear and drop stitched stockings.

I wore a summer suit and a straw hat out on the train, to keep cool, and was snow bound on the way to Los Angeles, and frost bitten, by gum, after I got here. It sure was a cold night when we pulled in, and as the train was four or five hours late, I footed it up town, to a hotel.

I didnt put up at Mr. Alexandria's or the Van Noose, as I heard on the train they charged you extra to blow your nose, if you stopped there. So I found a room on Main Street (which is nothing to be proud of) and the landlady hollered after me, as I went up the stairs, not to blow out the gas.

15

I didnt.

By gum, I was so stiff with the cold, I kept it burning all night to melt the icicles I knew must be hanging to the end of my nose. There was only one measley pair of summer blankets on that bed, and the pillows were so small, I came blamed near losing 'em in my ear before morning.

I went to bed with all my clothes on, and the rest of the night I laid there and shook until I jarred the bed, and some fellar who had a room under mine, pounded on the ceiling, and told me to make less noise up there.

I couldnt help it—the slats in the old bed were loose and rattled, any way.

16

If ever I was lonesome, Bill, and wanted to go home, I did that night.

It wasnt because I was alone, either—no, not that, for I'll bet I held up over one hundred fleas in different sections of that bed and on me, before morning, and every one of 'em was as big as a rat.

Now of course I dont really mean to say that they were that big, but by gum, they looked so to me that night. You know I never saw a real, healthy, hustling California flea before. I could see their eyes shine as they looked at me, and I'll swear some of 'em had on glasses and carried lanterns so they could find me easier.

There were old gray beards among 'em that had voted for years, and I'll 17 bet hadnt had a square meal since the last tenderfoot slept in that bed.

I found out afterwards, that they dont bite the natives—skins are too thick—but a real tender, juicy down easter, is a much of a treat to 'em, as a porterhouse steak is in a bum boarding house.

WHEN IT RAINS

21

CHAPTER II

THERE are three things in California that are different from the same three things any where else on earth.

They are sunshine, moonshine, and rain. I might add the biggest liars for the fourth, but that is another story.

I've seen it rain some in my time, but by gum, when it rains in California, its got all the rest of the 22 country skinned to death. Where one drop lights on you in a back east rain-storm, a bucketful strikes you in the same spot, out here.

It rains in sheets, in blankets, and in comforters, and then some. Every drop certainly must be a comforter, for you never saw people so tickled to death over a rain-storm as these Californians are.

Every blamed man, woman and child, acts like they'd struck a gold mine in their own back yard.

The kids dance up and down and cry, "Now we can get our red wagons"; the wife will smile and say, "This will bring the automobile the old man promised me", and the old man—if he's a farmer, he's out talking it over with his nearest 23 neighbor, both of 'em soaking wet, but with a smile that wont wash off and crying out, "Bully, bully, keep it up, keep it up! Its raining dollars, every drop." If he's a store keeper, he is smiling and nodding to every one who comes into the store, rubbing his hands together all the while, for it means "Dollars" in big letters to each and every one of 'em. Thats why they are so happy.

They aint out here, any of 'em, for their health, altho many a one has found it.

Health is laying around loose anywhere in Southern California. Its here in chunks, and if you've got life enough in you to draw a long breath, you wont have to draw very many, before you begin to realize, they 24 taste different, and make you feel like a kid back in school days when you played hookey and went fishing.

California air kinder gets you all over. Your musty old lungs aint had such a treat in all their life before, and they are already beginning to open up and grow larger, same as everything else does in California.

And when after one of these glorious rains, the sun comes out—I mean the real California sunshine, not a blinking, watery-eyed sun, peeking around the corner of a cloud, and then dodging back for fear some one saw it—the back home kind)—no sir-ree, I mean the real thing that just beams on you, and throws a shine over everything until your eyes hurt, and you wonder if it aint made of 25 different stuff than the kind you left back east in Illinois.

It makes the trees come back to life and grow young again, the flowers open up in brighter colors than before, and the hills are carpeted with green velvet, as far as the eye can reach.

And a funny feeling comes creeping over you—they've all got it out here—but for the life of me, I can describe it to you. You'll have to come out and feel it for yourself, Bill.

AUCTIONS

29

CHAPTER III

MUST say I never saw such a town for having auctions as Los Angeles.

For a fact, I counted nineteen auctions one night on the two main streets inside of eight blocks.

Most of 'em were Japs selling out, going home, they said, but inside of a week, these same fellows were having an “Opening” giving away presents, further up town in another block.

30

They aint the only heathens selling out in that town, either.

One night when I was bumming around town I just naturally strolled into a jewelry auction.

That auctioneer was sure a dandy. He sold those suckers—(men suckers I mean)—solid gold watches for \$1.95 *guaranteed*.

There were plenty of women suckers there; yep, bunches of 'em, and they bit harder than any man in the crowd.

They bid as high as five cents at a jump, and bid right over their own bids, until the auctioneer tickled so hard, he had to blow his nose to hide the laugh.

His face was as red as a beet, and he nearly busted holding in, while he kept on saying,

31

“Lady, dont let it get away from you for only half a dime. If you cant use it for cake spoon, you can use it to spank the baby with.”

Then some reckless woman would risk five cents more, and get it.

Mebbe when she counted out her change, it was all in nickels and dimes, and the old pocketbook was busted at both ends and mighty flat in the middle, but she held her head high as she sailed out of the store, with a silver plated baby spanker, and ten chances to one, she was an old maid, with no immediate prospects.

But there were others in that crowd—not old maids, but suckers. Yep, he hooked me, all right, and before I knew it, I had paid \$1.75 ³² for a genuine diamond scarf pin as big as a marble and just about as brilliant.

I met Jones as I came out of the auction, and as he had been lingering in Jim Jeffries Saloon (all in big electric lighted letters) I could plainly see that a few more smiles on his part, would make that diamond scarf-pin I had just bought, look like Jeffries sign on a foggy night.

Yep, they have fog in Los Angeles.

The Angels will tell you its “Unusual,” but by gum, it fogs so hard here sometimes, that you have to follow the car tracks to find your way home.

I had to pay for several glasses of “Oh-be-joyful,” before I could convince Jones that he needed that 33 diamond scarf-pin the worst way, and I obliged him by taking in exchange, a sore-eyed bull pup, he'd bought on a street corner that afternoon, that was two-thirds fox terrier and the other part mule.

PASADENA

37

CHAPTER IV

IN Pasadena, meaning “Crown of the Valley,” they have a street called Orange Grove Avenue. I dont know why.

I didnt see any orange groves when I drove through there.

The avenue is also called “Millionaires Row,” and “A Mile of Millionaires,” for there are more millionaires on that avenue, than any other street of its length in the country.

38

The houses are certainly mighty fine—the fat pocketbook of the owners giving free rein to the builders of the castles, and the glorious sunshine of Southern California, doing the rest, in the way of flowers and beautiful lawns.

Yep, I paid a dollar a head for one of those two horse rigs that stand four deep at every street corner and nail a tourist the minute he steps off the street car. You know, Californians seem to know us, I dont know why—mebbe we look easy, or again mebbe its the cut of our trousers—still, they spot a women tourist just as easy, so of course that cant be the reason, because—well, any way, they catch a tenderfoot with, “Carriage to all the interesting parts of the City, 39 sir,” and its dollars to peanuts, some female in the crowd will roll her eyes at you and say, “Oh, what a lovely day for a drive,” and its all off.

So you dump your overcoat, and your kodak and your lunch basket and your umbrella, and a bunch of wilted poppies, you've been carting around for two solid hours (to please some fool woman

who “just couldnt resist gathering the beautiful things”) you dump all of these into the nearest rig and also four or five hard earned dollars into the driver's pocket, and set back and make a bluff at enjoying yourself.

Speaking of California poppies. Of course, as I say, after you've carted a wilted bunch around for a few hours, you aint much stuck on 'em, 40 but without a doubt, they are the finest wild-flower, the sun ever blossomed out.

In color and shape they look like our eastern buttercup, only their color is a brighter orange, and one flower is as big as twenty of 'em put together.

And say, Bill, when you look ahead of you, up on the side of a little sloping hill, at the foot of the mountains, and see a solid carpet of these flowers as big as a city block, and bigger—it kinder makes you draw a long breath, and feel funny inside.

You know the feeling you get when some one flings the old “Stars and Stripes” out in a good stiff breeze—you know Bill, something kinder 41 like geese pimples go scooting up your backbone and end in the roots of your hair—well, thats the same feeling that nabs you when you get your first sight of a California poppy field. Like a hungry kid in a pie factory, your eyes get bigger and bigger as you drop down in a field of these golden blossoms, and pick and pick and keep on picking, hurrying as fast as you can, for fear the other fellar will get a bigger bunch than you do. There aint no strings on 'em—you're welcome to pick all you can carry away.

This last dont apply to the golden beauties on trees—California oranges. To these you are *not* welcome, not even if it would give you the pleasure of saying “you picked them off the 42 trees yourself,” which means a whole lot to an easterner, who only sees oranges wrapped up in tissue paper, for sale back home.

You know, its a surprise to me that these Californians who are eternally hooping up the glorious climate, on paper and otherwise, and spending a whole lot of money shipping East printed folders by the carload, to get the California Bee, buzzing in your head, until you'd almost give the farm

away to get rid of it—you want to go to California so bad—you know, its a wonder to me that some of the fellars that have the most say so in the Angel City, dont buy an orange grove at some bargain sale price, and allow all tourists holding return tickets East, the privilege of 43 going into a real orange grove and picking, say, half a dozen oranges, all by themselves.

That would be the biggest advertisement Los Angeles ever dreamed of, and it would beat reading over a lot of some other fellars ideas, all to holler.

New Years day I went over to Pasadena to the Tournament of Roses. This is a “doings” held in the Crown City every year, and the natives and tourists for miles around come to admire the show. Just why it is called the Tournament of Roses, I dont know. To be sure, there are some roses, more carnations, and mostly geraniums. But right here let me say that the geraniums in California, are the finest flowers you 44 ever set eyes on. By gum, they are prettier than half the roses back home, for the bunches of blossoms on each stalk are as big as my two fists, and the color of 'em is away beyond anything I can describe to you.

A hedge of these scarlet beauties beat a hedge of bum roses any time and any where, even back home in Illinois.

Them's my sentiments, only dont let the editor of the home paper get hold of it, Bill.

I owe him a little money and I dont want to get him riled up.

The floats were all right, and some pretty girls, a few, were mixed in among the flowers, but Los Angeles flowers and Los Angeles girls knock 'em all to holler.

45

The Tournament or the flowers or the girls aint a smell side of the Fiesta the Angel City hands out to visitors each year in May. It's the prettiest thing you could ever dream about, Bill, and that aint no printed folder talk either.

I've seen two of 'em and hope to see a good many more before I die. In some few ways Pasadena is ahead of Los Angeles. Its the only spot in the country whose citizens, as a whole, think there is no place like it. A while back they had a revival meeting in town.

There was a good sized attendance and after they had all got pretty well worked up, the preacher shouted, "Now all you folks that want to go to Heaven, stand up."

46

All jumped to their feet, except one little fellar, who stuck his hands in his pockets, and kept his seat.

The preacher looked at him mighty hard and called out,

"Do you mean to tell me you dont want to go to Heaven?"

"Nope," he answered, "Pasadena is good enough for me."

And that is about the way they all feel that live here—good enough for them.

I heard one of 'em say once he'd rather be a California jackrabbit, than a New York millionaire.

WHEN EAST COMES WEST

49

CHAPTER V

THE N.E.A. was out here a year or so ago, and they certainly had a great time. They were all in on anything that was free, and almost everything was open to them, and no questions asked. A fellar that runs a tamale wagon told me a good story about them while they were here, and I'll tell it to you.

A bunch of women members went into a cheap popular restaurant, where 50 a full meal is only ten cents. The leader told the boss, as about seven of them filed in, that they were "tourists."

"Needn't a told me," he grunted.

"And we are here with the N. E. A.," was added.

"Sure," he said, without taking any interest.

"We would like to patronize your restaurant," she continued.

"All right," he said, looking out of the window.

"We shall remain here about two weeks, and if we come here we would like to get rates."

"*Rates*? On a ten cent meal? Soup, meat, vegetables, ice cream and coffee? Say woman, I've seen cheap guys in pants, but a female what will 51 ask for rates in a ten cent hash house, is the limit. You beat the female that came in here yesterday, and told the waitress that she came out here with a ten dollar bill and only one undershirt, and she didn't intend to change either one of 'em until she got home. Rates on a ten cent meal? Nix! Vamoose!" and they were glad to vamoose, which means "hike" in California, Bill.

LOS ANGELES STREETS

55

CHAPTER VI

I GOT into Los Angeles in ample time to go through their annual tearing up period.

You know, there is something funny about this. Just as soon as winter comes, Los Angeles begins to tear up its streets from one end to the other.

All summer long, when mighty few strangers are in town, there is nothing doing. But just as sure as
56 fine sunshiny weather begins, then an army of dagos and greezers march forth, and proceed to
dig up every blamed street in town.

It is just the same, year in and year out. Its got to be a joke with the tourists, for Los Angeles
wouldnt look natural to 'em, when they come out to spend the winter, if the whole shopping district
wasnt well nigh impassable.

They will finish putting down a macadamized street one day, and by jingo, during the following
night, I'll be hanged if some fellar hasnt figured out how to tear it up. Needn't take my word for it,
Bill.

Here's another fellar kicking through the columns of a Los Angeles paper.

57

SPEED THE DAY! Will there ever come a season, When the workmen will abstain From ripping
loose the asphalt On Broadway, Spring and Main? Speed the happy, gladsome morning, When with
joy our brimming cup Will slop over, with this edict:

DO NOT TEAR

THIS

PAVEMENT UP!

After you've cussed yourself sick, trying to squirm your way under horses' noses and women's four-
story hats—falling over a couple of hundred little wooden saw-horses the workmen stick up any old
place in the middle of the street, while they patch up a few dozen holes—go and hire an automobile
at \$4.00 per hour 58 (—yep, they soak you that much in the Angel City) and take a ride out into the
country or through the beautiful residence portion of the town.

The country and residence portion is all right—glorious sunshine and views, and the finest, clearest air that ever dusted out the cobwebs in your lungs, but suffering Peter, the roads—the roads!! Bill, I never worked so hard and paid \$4.00 an hour for the privilege of doing so, in all my life—never!

We hit every chuck hole from Pasadena to the ocean. Now, when I tell you this, it means a whole lot more to me, than it does to you, for it is a sore subject to look back on, I tell you.

59

They have more varieties of “Bullyvards” around Los Angeles, than that man Heinz has pickles—57 varieties wouldnt cover 'em.

There are little holes and big holes, long holes and short holes, holes you fall in all over, and the kind you pull in after you, on your way down. There are mud holes, water holes, oil holes, dust holes, in fact, Bill, every known variety of chuck holes you ever thought of, can be found in and around Los Angeles.

And mud?

You have to spell the Los Angeles kind M-u-d-d, to have anyone half realize the meaning of the word.

Some of the wholesale streets of Los Angeles can boast of mud that will reach the hub of any ordinary 60 wagon, Aliso, Alameda and Los Angeles Streets being the worst.

The Suburban cars have to pass through these streets, on the way to Los Angeles. I heard a native and a tenderfoot talking on a Pasadena car one day, while the car was going through Aliso street.

The native was telling what a great and wonderful city Los Angeles was—all true, every word of it.

While he was talking, he happened to get a side view of the quiet listeners face. He saw that his eyes and mouth were wide open in amazement at the numerous mud-stuck wagons by the side of the road, and quickly said,

“You see, we Californians never *dreamed* Los Angeles would be such a big city—never dreamed it!”

61

And the little fellar answered, “Wall, stranger, its about time for some one to box your ears and tell you to wake up.”

MT. LOWE

65

CHAPTER VII

AS all tenderfeet are expected to do, I took the trip up Mt. Lowe. Its all right, that trip is, except that it makes you feel that if you ever get down on the level again you'll go to church a little oftener, and be prepared for the next world.

By gum, there are spots on that trip, and then some!

I went up with a fellar named 66 Smith, and as we got half way up that blamed incline, I got to thinking pretty hard.

You see, Bill, at the bottom of that incline, there's a solid wall of rock, fifty feet high, not more than twenty-five feet from where those cable cars stop.

Yes-sir-ree, I got to thinking that if anything busted, and we shot back down hill, they would never be able to tell which was me and which was Smith when they gathered us up to ship back East in the baggage car.

You bet I kept my mouth shut and I guess I held my breath too, for someway I kinder felt that too much laughing and loud talking would jar that dinky car and mebbe loosen something.

67

I was mighty glad when I reached level ground at the top of the incline.

Then began a foot race for another dinky car, a bobbed tail electric this time, that takes you on further up the mountain to Mt. Lowe. There were about seventy-five people all trying at once to get into one lonesome little car, that groaned with only twenty-five aboard, but they all got on somehow or somewhere, and the rest of the ride we wiggled up and down, in and out, around corners and across squeaking little bridges, that looked like they'd go down for a cent and a half, and all the time everybody was "oh-ing" and "ah-ing" and no wonder.

Say Bill, if you ever get to California, dont miss this trip. They 68 skin you on the price of it, all right, but its the most satisfying "skinning" I've had since I came out here.

Be sure and take your mother-in-law along, Bill, and half way up that incline, if there's anything on earth you want, ask her for it, while you are hanging onto the side of the mountain at an angle of 65 degrees.

You'll get it all right, if she's got wind enough left to say, "Yep!"

THEATERS

71

CHAPTER VIII

LOS ANGELES has a lot of theaters all the way from 5 cents to \$2.50 a seat. I took in more of the 5 cent kind than the \$2.50 variety.

There are two Opera Houses in town, one on Main Street and one on Broadway, and you get a good deal more for your money at the Main Street show, than at the other.

I blew myself just once for the 72 \$2.50 a seat kind, and how they could have the nerve to charge it for what was handed out that night, is more than I can tell.

The only thing I remember, worth remembering at that Broadway Opera House, were two white cardboard signs 3 x 5 feet, one on each side of the house, where everybody up stairs, down stairs and in the “lady's chamber” could read them, saying,

NOTICE

DONT SPIT ON THESE FLOORS

They say they are great spitters, these Californians—mebbe they are, I dont know.

They also have little metal boxes on the back of each seat, and by 73 putting in a dime, out pops a box of candy—mebbe!

By gum, I played that machine in front of me, three times—thirty cents—and nothing happened. So I tried the next one, and got a box of chocolates, that, honest, Bill, if one of 'em hit you, it would knock you down.

They had been there, well, some fellar said, since the Opera House was built. I dont know. I gave them to a kid in front of me that had the “wiggles” and they kept him busy the rest of the show.

They say a Los Angeles man will sell everything he owns if he can get his price for it, and b'gosh, I believe it.

Yes sir, everything he owns, except his wife, and between you and 74 me, Bill, many a poor hen pecked man looks over the exchange column to find some other fellar, who like himself, is ready and anxious to make a trade in that line, on any old terms to suit.

Los Angeles is a great town for “swaps.”

The papers every Sunday are full of 'em.

They'll swap anything from a half worn out tooth brush or a moth eaten angora cat, to a ten acre orange grove with a nine thousand dollar mortgage on it, and some of 'em would sell the shirt on their back, if they could make a profit on it.

You know, Bill, I believe you could even make a good trade on your mother-in-law out here—nothing 75 like trying, better bring her along, and trade her for a good setting of Rhode Island Reds.

Of course that might seem awful cheap for her, but old hens aint worth much out here—market is overstocked, and besides, Californians aint looking for trouble.

THROUGH TOURISTS' GLASSES

79

CHAPTER IX

I HEARD two tenderfeet talking on the way up town from the depot the other day.

At almost every street corner in Los Angeles, you'll find little tamale wagons standing.

One fellar saw the sign, "Tamales" and asked the other one what they were.

"Oh, they're a kind of bird they have out here," he said, looking very 80 wise—and to the conductor as he passed through the car, said "We want to get off at Fig—Fig—Fig—"

"Figueroa Street," jerked out the conductor, and the tourist nodded wearily, as he grunted something about "the damned dago names out here, anyway."

Speaking of street cars, Bill, I've got to give Los Angeles the whole palm tree for having the finest street car service in the country.

There are more cars, going in more directions, than you can imagine, and they also have more home made rules, than any street car company in the country.

When tourists come to town they sit up and take notice of the wonderful 81 breed of street car conductors Los Angeles is blessed (?) with.

If you should forget to ask for a transfer the minute you drop a nickel into the dirtiest paw you ever saw on a man, then you've paid your way into the circus, and the fun begins.

If the passenger happens to be a big fellar, and could without any effort knock the smart conductor down, he'll only get a hard look and his transfer—if its a little fellar, that couldn't lick a fly that was stuck on sticky fly paper, he'll shrivel him up to the size of a peanut in just about two seconds.

If its a woman, and a fat and sassy one, he'll kinder back off and tell her to ask for her transfer when she pays her fare, and all he'll get out of it, is 82 “Aw gwan, yer pipe's out”! and he'll meekly hand out the paper.

But the tired little woman, with a lot of “cash and no delivery” groceries piled up in her lap, who is getting home from work, and who is so done up, she hasnt got life enough left in her to care whether a man smokes in her face or not—she gets hers in bunches, and then some.

After he has jawed until his tongue aches, and has spit out everything he has in his mouth, except a big chew of tobacco, he shoves the transfer under her nose, and leaves her wondering why the good Lord ever made such a thing and called it “Man.”

The other day I heard a smart aleck say to a woman passenger, “I dont remember getting any fare from you.”

83

“Dont you,” she snapped back, “Wall *I* do, but I dont remember seeing you ring it up!”

He didnt have anything further to say, and went back and knocked down a few more fares.

HOLLYWOOD AND BALDWIN'S RANCH

87

CHAPTER X

HOLLYWOOD is another mighty pretty place just out of Los Angeles.

Beautiful homes and well kept places are plentiful there.

Of course the town has its drawbacks—all little towns that are run by some of its prominent citizens, do have.

Say, Bill, you have to get a prescription from the doctor, before you 88 can use cider vinegar on your beans, in Hollywood.

Fact!

Cant even drink home made “Hires Root Beer” in your own house unless you ask a trustee about it, and honest, he'll help you drink a bottle of it, and then haul you off to jail for treating him.

Now out at Lucky Baldwin's Ranch its different.

Everybody knows of Baldwin's Ranch and the town of Arcadia he's laid out.

If I was a poet, Bill, I could write poetry about Baldwin's Ranch, but I aint, so let it go at that.

You can drive for miles and miles in any direction, and they'll tell you, you are still in Baldwin's Ranch.

89

They make the finest apricot brandy out there, and sell the best beer, I've tasted in many a day.

You dont have to get a doctor's prescription to get a glass of it, either—you may need a doctor before you've been there very long, for everything is open house at Baldwin's, and its “eat, drink and be merry” in Arcadia.

He's got a race track, called Santa Anita Park, thats worth travelling some to see. Its big and broad in every way, just as everything else is the old man has a hand in.

I believe the view from that grand stand cant be beaten on earth, and it must tickle the old fellar to look over it and say “Its all mine.”

They say it was the dream of his 90 life to have the finest race track in the country, and his dream sure has come true.

Yep, I won instead of lost, the day I went out to see the ponies run—mebbe things out there wouldnt have looked so fine to me, if I had come home busted.

CALIFORNIA YARNS

93

CHAPTER XI

YOU know, Bill, California has the name of being the home of the biggest liars on earth, but that dont mean the “birthplace” of 'em, b'gosh.

When you come to think of it, most of the people out here came from the East and they are the ones that are doing the lying, not the natives.

Old Sam Watkins, who used to be 94 a deacon in the church back home, and led all the prayer meetings, and took up the collections—he's been out here for five years, and by gum, of all the liars I've run across in California, he takes the whole bakery.

He told me more double-back-action lies in five minutes, than you could count on both hands, and feet, too, and sir, he never turned a hair doing it.

When he told me about “oysters growing on trees” out here, somewhere, I had to say, “Why, Samuel! How can you lie so!”

He says its a fact!

Mebbe it is—I dont know.

He also told me of a fellar out here, who planted some pumkin seeds, and 95 by gum, before he could get up off his knees, and run, the vines came up and choked him to death.

Well, now you know, Bill, when a deacon of a church, tells you such fairy tales as that, you can imagine what an every day citizen of Los Angeles can fire at you.

He told me one more.

Once when they had a thunder storm out here, the lightening struck a mother hen, with eight little chicks under her, and killed every blamed one of 'em, but never hurt the old hen a bit.

By gum, now I come to think of it, I'll bet a doughnut, that was the very old hen I had served to me one day, out at Casa Verdugo, for a spring chicken. Casa Verdugo is a mighty 96 swell Spanish resturant, just out side of Los Angeles.

No-sir-ree, thunder and lightening wouldnt have any effect on that hen, for I tried every thing from a pocket knife to a saw, I tipped the waiter for, and then couldnt see where I had made any headway, even on the white meat.

After I'd sweat so you could wring out my undershirt, I gave up, and ordered some tamales.

I got 'em, and they were bully but only those who have eaten “hot tamales,” at Casa Verdugo, will understand and marvel how I could have lived to tell the tale, when I say I ate six of 'em, before I threw up my hands and told the waiter to turn on the hose.

97

If the place that never freezes over, is any hotter than those tamales were, I'm going to travel the “straight and narrow path,” mighty carefully the rest of my days.

I aint going to take any chances—no-sir-ree.

I'll send one home for your mother-in-law, Bill. Put in a little extra cayenne pepper, and a dash of Tobasco sauce,—as the cook books say—then take a trip out of town for a few days, until the hot spell blows over.

One of 'em *ought* to bring on paralysis of the tongue—still—I know you've tried everything, and nothing seems to work, in her case.

BARGAIN SALES

101

CHAPTER XII

LOS ANGELES is the greatest town for bargain sales. One store or another, has 'em every day out here.

I got into the middle of a stocking sale once, and when I got out, and took account of stock, I didnt have all the clothes on I started in with, but I had two pairs of women's polka dotted stockings wound around my neck, and another pair in my pocket.

102

Its a wonder I wasnt arrested for shop-lifting.

I never saw such actions in all my life, Bill. Women, big and little, grabbed and pulled and hauled, and grunted and groaned, and seesawed back and forth, each one trying to spend some poor devil-of-a-husbands' hard earned dollars, while he was racing around town trying to “do” some other poor devil, to make both ends meet. Mebbe the hat he wore was last years and his shoes were out at the sides, and run down at the heels, but his wife was a close buyer and would, no doubt, bring him home a pair of light green socks, embroidered in yellow polka dots.

In the scramble, one woman got hold of a single stocking, and another 103 woman side of her, got hold of the mate to it, and a few jerks pulled them apart.

And do you think either woman would give up her stocking?

Not much!

The clerk called the floor walker and he called the manager, but there was nothing doing. One of 'em said “she wouldnt let that piefaced female have that stocking if they called the police.”

So they each paid for one stocking and kept it.

One woman bought seventeen pairs.

“A woman cant have too many pairs of stockings,” I heard her say. “This nasty yellow pair, I'll save until next Christmas and give 'em to Mrs. Brown, to pay her for that old 104 ten cent handkerchief she sent me last Christmas.”

Think of it, Bill—seventeen pairs of stockings these hard times—I'm glad I aint married, b'gosh.

The Angel City has plenty of mighty fine stores, barring a few whose bargain sales (in big red letters) are carried on midway a dinky little entrance door, where customers have to crowd and push their way through a bunch of half baked females buying real lace at 2 cents a yard.

For a solid half hour, these women will stand, first on one foot and then on the other, hanging onto their bargain like a bull pup to an unwelcome pair of pants, waiting for a not over bright, gum chewing girl, who is frantically trying to add up nine times 105 two, while she chews off the end of her lead pencil, and lifts her rat up an inch or two higher at the same time.

Oh, I tell you Bill, its all very well to make fun of women going to bargain sales. If they *do* get a bargain, by gum, they earn it.

Just one genuine bargain sale would lay out any strong man in about thirty seconds, and yet a frail and delicate woman, who cant possibly do her own housework, will get up before daylight so she can be down to the stores before the doors open, and for two mortal hours, she'll push and shove and squirm her way through a barricade of bargain crazy females, the sight of which would turn back a crowd of husky football players any day.

106

Packed in like sardines, around a 2 x 4 table, grandmothers and grandchildren, wedged in three and four deep, are panting and struggling, as they blindly push an arm through a small opening and grab hold of anything they can reach on the table.

Whatever they grab, they hold onto, for fear they wont get hold of anything else.

And when they get it home, and come to their senses, they wonder what in thunder they bought it for, anyway. The poor over worked husband uses a stronger word than “thunder,” but her word means just as much to her, Bill, and its more ladylike.

And for a free sample of “Zee-Nut” she will charge to the front of 107 an army of wild-eyed females, who like herself cant see a sign with the word “Free” on it without stopping.

You never saw a woman get three feet beyond a “Free” sign, Bill, without turning around and going back, to ask, “What is?”

No-sir-ree.

Its just as impossible for her to do it, as it is for her to rub her eye, without opening her mouth at the same time.

They *have* to do it.

Zee-Nut is a Los Angeles production, and only one of the many good things she has a right to swell up over. Its a mixture of popcorn, cocoanut and honey, and will shut up a snarling kid, and take the kinks out of a mean disposition, at the first bite.

108

True, I broke a tooth off once, eating some of it, but a “Didnt hurt a bit,” dentist, whose smiling face I'd know if I met it in a custard pie, in a “come-back” resturant—dug out the roots for me, and didnt hurt a bit—mebbe!

Once when I felt he had gone down about three feet, and was still going, I asked him if he thought he was boring for oil, or just digging post holes.

That fellar ought to strike oil some day, for he certainly wasnt afraid of work.

I'll bet, Bill, if he ever finds a fellar with a big enough mouth, he'll get into it with a pick and shovel and locate some mining claims before he quits.

ARROWHEAD HOT SPRINGS

111

CHAPTER XIII

ARROWHEAD Hot Springs is another place I visited.

Its a beautiful spot—aint no place up there to spend your money, except to give it to the landlord, and anyone else standing around. Funny—the hotel folder reads, “No tips allowed. Any employee accepting same will be fired.” But they were all fire proof, I found.

No, there aint much excitement 112 up there. Its a fine place to sleep, Bill, if they'd let you. But they wake you up before daylight with ding-dong bells, like they do at some Sparring place in Europe, when you'd give your old hat to sleep until noon, and shorten up the day a little. If you follow the doctors orders, you must go down before breakfast and drink from the babbling brook. That water certainly does babble, all right. In fact, it talks right out loud. And it spells “Bad Eggs” very plainly even if you was blind and couldnt read.

By gum, Bill, you have to hold your nose to get any where near the dipper.

The water is scalding hot, and they said you could boil an egg in it. 113 Some one certainly must have cornered a whole hen yard once and dumped hen fruit in by the car load.

Of course they didnt, Bill, but I'm only trying to give you a faint idea of how bad that water smells.

The Arrowhead itself is worth going miles to see, and some day the hotel people will make every tourist that arrives put on blinders and charge 'em two bits for a view of it.

SOME THINGS I BOUGHT IN LOS ANGELES

117

CHAPTER XIV

I BOUGHT a set of monkey triplets in a Japanese store for two bits.

Two bits, Bill, is Californese for twenty-five cents.

I got bit on 'em, too, for they sold 'em as low as five cents a set, later in the season, and at last gave 'em away with a package of Japanese incense.

Now, Japanese incense, Bill, is a lot of stuff pressed together hard, like 118 Spratts Dog Biscuits, only in smaller doses, thank goodness, and it is supposed to smell mighty fine when you burn it, but suffering Peter—a pile of rubbish burning in a Westlake alley, is a bunch of violets compared to it.

Glue, old rubber boots, out of date eggs, last years hamburger and over ripe limburger—all these and a few more, were never in their most “smelly” days, guilty of “acting up,” like real Japanese incense burning.

These little monkeys I bought, come in all sizes, from the little baby monks, to the old granddaddies. They all sit up in a row, three of 'em, and one has his hands over his ears, the second covering his eyes, and the third has his hands over his mouth.

119

I say “his,” Bill, because they must certainly be boy monkeys—a girl monkey, would never live long enough to have her first picture made, if she had to close her mouth, and her ears, and her eyes. You know that yourself, Bill.

I asked the grinning Jap, I bought em of, what they were up to. All I could get out of him was, that they were the “three wise monkeys,” and meant, “I hear no evil, see no evil, and speak no evil.”

Mebbe they dont—I dont know.

I also bought a flea scratcher, at the same store.

Never heard of one, did you?

Waal, they are little carved ivory hands about as big as a half dollar, with the fingers drawn up, ready for 120 business. They are on the end of a long stick, and the trick is, to slide it up and down between the shoulder blades, and along your back bone, turning the gentleman over before he has bored a hole clean through you. They tell you in Los Angeles, that the people down in San Diego couldn't live without 'em.

They are fashionable down there, and I heard that some of the society leaders gave “scratcher” parties, the most graceful handler of the scratcher, winning the prize.

When you are in San Diego, they'll tell you this same story on Los Angeles.

With the exception of San Francisco, San Diego and Los Angeles love each other more than any two 121 towns I've run across. Cant say enough about each other, while San Francisco and Los Angeles love so strongly, they could eat each other up.

Speaking of fleas, you know, Bill, there are some people in this world who are so blamed mean, a flea wouldnt bite 'em.

I met the meanest man in California the other day, and if I ever set eyes on him again, I'll bust him up in business, buying arnica and court plaster.

That man told me the very first chance I got, to pick a ripe olive and eat it.

I did.

All I've got to say is, if ever I lay my hands on that critter, it will take 122 him longer to close his face than it did me, after I ate one of 'em.

There are some things in this world that seem to stick right in your throat, no matter how much you swallow over 'em and I'll bet, I'll never be able to get the taste of that olive, below my wind-pipe. I'll send a couple of 'em home, Bill,—give 'em to your mother-in-law, and tell her to put 'em both in her mouth at once—that they have to be eaten in pairs, and if she lives through it, and still believes in you, she'll stand by you till your money gives out.

JUST DREAMING

125

CHAPTER XV

BILL, didnt some fellar ask another fellar once, “what was more rare than a day in June?”

If he'd asked me, I'd told him, “a winter in Los Angeles.”

If there's any place nearer Heaven on this earth, than a sunny winter day in Southern California, when as far as you can see, the grass is like a great green rug, and flowers of every color and kind, are in bloom—when you 126 can take your back home papers out under a big oak tree and lie down and read of some poor devil freezing to death, in a down-east blizzard—if there's any place, Bill, that can hold a candle to it on this earth, or any other, yours truly dont want to know of it.

Like the little fellar from Pasadena, this is good enough for your Uncle Eben.

If you didnt have a calendar in your vest pocket, and didnt see a newspaper every day, you'd forget what month it is out here.

To-day is the 9th of March, and its so hot, Bill, that if I was a dog, my tongue would be hanging out, and you could hear me pant clear across the street.

127

There's a little spot near Los Angeles called Oneonta Park, named by the big fellar Huntington and owned by him, too. His home place is called Oneonta, back in York state, and he gave this beauty spot the same names.

If the good people back in the original Oneonta could wake up some warm sunny morning in midwinter, and find themselves in the midst of roses and orange blossoms stretching out as far as they can see, instead of ice and snow, likewise stretching out further than they *wish* they could see—they would wonder why Huntington didnt call it Paradise for want of a better name, for it must have made him think of home—its so different, Bill.

128

Wonder where the fellar was located, that wrote the song called, “Listen to the Nightingale.” He wouldnt had to worked so hard, if he'd been sitting here under this old oak tree with me. He would

have had to put on the brakes, to keep from writing too many verses, for he couldnt have told it all in one or two.

Now, I'd kinder like to write a song called, "Listen to the Turtle Doves," for there are twenty of 'em in the branches over my head, holding a concert with the same number of mocking birds, and I'll bet my bottom dollar, I could kill enough quail—if I was mean enough—within a hundred feet of me, to be arrested for having too many in my possession.

These quail are so tame, Bill, they 129 seem more like pigeons out in the barn-yard back home.

This aint no lie.

You know yourself, I aint been out here long enough to get this everlasting lying disease in my system, and I'm willing to sit on top of a whole Bible factory and say what I've written is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but. I may be getting a little daffy on California, Bill, but there are two things I havn't got yet—bitten by a tarantula or acclimated.

From some half baked farmers back home, who came to see me, when they heard I was going "clear way out to Californy," I expected to be dodging tarantulas the biggest part of the time.

130

One of 'em heard they crawled into bed with you—another that you'd find 'em in your boots in the morning and that if you didnt shake your boots hard before you put 'em on they'd bite your big toe and you'd have to have your toe cut off, or turn 'em up for good and all.

The first night, when the fleas got after me, I thought of old Slim Peters, and remembered he said to take my jack knife and cut the toe off, just as soon as I felt the sting.

But when I started to get it, I remembered again, I traded it to an Indian on the way out to California for a string of glass beads and that was the only thing, I guess, that saved my toe.

I havent seen a tarantula yet, Bill, 131 hard as I've hunted—only stuffed ones in the stores. But I'm still hunting, for I've made up my mind to find one or bust, and I'll send it home to Slim Peters, C.O.D., when I do.

The natives tell you it takes a year to get acclimated—that means, Bill, getting the “back East” out of you, and the “California” into you. This has to happen to every one that stays here, just as the mumps and the measles are bound to come to every youngster, before he's been on earth very long.

There are so many things to make you wish you was young again, out here. When I was a young fellar and took the girls home from prayer meetings and quilting parties, I 132 remember I used to think I was a pretty gay boy with the girls and I kinder “took” with 'em, cutting out many a “steady” in those days, and I used to think the whole secret of it laid in my carrying the girls boquets of Canterbury Bells and Sweet Williams.

That's the only kind of posies there was in the old garden at home, but what a wonderful chance a fellar in California has, to court a girl!

Flowers are dirt cheap everywhere, and Bill, its good for sore eyes to get a squint at the baskets of flowers you can see any day on the street corners of Los Angeles.

Carnations, all colors, for ten cents a dozen—think of it, and this in mid-winter, when back home you folks 133 are wading through snow up to your suspender buttons, and blowing your stiff old fingers until your wind gives out.

And they grow out of doors, acres of 'em, and in the sweet pea fields, they mow 'em down for market instead of cutting 'em. Life is too short to count 'em—one—two—three; there are millions of 'em and violets—you just never saw such a sight!

Solid banks of these purple blossoms are tucked into vacant spaces, up against the buildings, everywhere throughout the business district, and only five cents for a generous bunch, while each blossom is as big as a quarter, and has a stem on it a quarter of a yard long.

You neednt snicker, Bill, at what I've just said, for it's the truth, cross my heart. I know what I said about the biggest liars coming from back East, but you know me, Bill, and you know I've never lied to you yet, excepting on that horse trade last summer. These baskets of flowers on the street corners in the middle of winter, are the biggest boost to the Angel City it could possibly have. They speak louder to “the stranger within the gates,” than all the printed stuff the Chamber of Commerce could hand out in a year.

Nothing but SUNshine and balmy air can bring forth such glorious flowers in mid-winter, and the stranger jots these beautiful sights down in his memory, and they live and are talked 135 of for years after, when about everything else he saw in California is forgotten. And all the children and grandchildren for years to come will pull up to the big fire place, heaped high with blazing logs—when the blinds on the old home back East, are creaking and rattling, and the unlatched barn door slams bangs as the fury of a real down east blizzard strikes it—they'll all creep up, and pulling their chairs a little nearer, sit and listen and listen, never tiring of hearing some member of the family, who once went “way out to California,” tell the wonderful fairy tales (that are true) of this land of dreams.

CATALINA ISLAND

CHAPTER XVI

CATALINA Island ought to be called the “Island of Beautiful Dreams.”

“Catalina” dont do it justice. But I bet a cookie whoever named it took their first trip over to the island on a rough day, and didnt feel very flowery.

Catalina is an island out at sea—way out—and between it and the mainland, there are more kinds of 140 tides and currents and swells, than from here to Europe.

It only takes two hours to make you feel that life aint so much after all, and you'd just as soon quit now as any old time.

Some fellar told me not to miss the trip, so I took it, and I didnt miss anything but home and mother all the way over and back.

Oh, my! Oh, my! Bill, you've seen how a cork on the end of a fishline bobs around when a big wave strikes it, aint you? Well, that tug-boat I went over in, had a cork beaten to death.

It acted more like a bucking broncho than anything I've seen before or since.

It bucked sideways, and humped 141 up in the middle, and kicked from all four corners at the same time.

I dont remember much about the beautiful view, and I havn't much to write about the “Grand old ocean” but I can truthfully say I parted with everything I had eaten in the last three years.

I laid down and threw up, and I stood up and threw down, until the elastic in my suspenders refused to work any longer, and I crawled under a settee and hoped some one would take pity on me, and knock me in the head.

There are times in a man's life when he has had enough, and had it rubbed in, too. I got mine on that galloping tug-boat, and I'll bet there are some of those passengers I went 142 over with, who are over there yet, afraid to try it again. They'd rather buy a lot and build, than to come back home.

I'd 'a been there yet if I hadnt found a feller with a hypodermic syringe, and gave him a couple of dollars to make me forget my troubles, and steer me to my room when I landed in Los Angeles.

On the boat going over, was a bride and groom. The bride looked very pretty as she tripped lightly down the gang-plank, and came aboard at San Pedro. But when we reached Catalina Island, I managed to pull the corner of one eye open long enough to get my bearings, and I saw the bride again—all that was left of her. Her beautiful curly locks were sewed 143 on a piece of tape, and had

worked out from under her own thin hair—her rats were shifted until they lopped over her right ear—she had lost most of her “dear little puffs,” in the bucket on the boat, and a little velvet bow was swinging, in the breeze, on the end of a few loose hairs. She was white as a sheet, and the two rosy spots on her cheeks—warranted not to fade when she bought it at the department store—made her face look like a Chinese lantern.

The weak kneed groom half carried her through the crowd of gaping summer visitors, who line up on both sides of the wharf at Catalina just to guy the poor seasick things that crawl off the boats. They guyed us all and had all the fun they wanted to, with 144 us—none of us cared, by gum, if they'd sicked a dog on us. One fellar hollered at me, “Hey, fatty, go back and get your hat,” but as I had used my hat when I was in a hurry, before I could find one of those blamed buckets, I didnt stop to answer back.

HOMESICK

147

CHAPTER XVII

CALIFORNIA is called the land of flowers, and the first fellar that called it so, was no liar.

He must have been a native—a truthful man, and likewise a “Booster.” You never heard a native knock California—no—sir—ree. They're always a boosting, and crowing, and swelling out like pouter pigeons, as soon as they begin to see us sit up and take notice.

148

Huh! dont they love to see our eyes stick out, and our mouths come open, while we gap at some of the glories of California—the land of sunshine—the land of gold.

And when we get homesick and say “Good bye, we're going home,” they only laugh at us—and Bill, its a kinder mean laugh, too—and they'll say “Oh, you'll come back, they all do. I'll give you

just six months at the most, and I'll bet you'll come back with all your relations, and stay next time for good."

So they slap you on the back, and give you a mighty warm handshake and say,

"Good by, pardner, tell all the good folks back there to come out to God's country, and be glad they're 149 living. Tell 'em they've only got one life to live, and they're going through for the last time. Tell 'em if the Pilgrim Fathers had landed on the Pacific coast instead of the Atlantic, little old New York wouldn't be on the map."

And I'll be hanged, Bill, before you know it, you're so darned homesick you'd give your old trunk if you hadn't bought your ticket East.

You don't *want* to go home—you want to *stay*!

And when the train pulls out for back east, and you're on it, b'gosh, there's something inside of you that begins to swell up like a sponge, as you look out of the car window and see the flowers and orange groves slipping by.

You are only beginning to realize you are leaving it all, and may never come back again.

Sure, Bill, a man's a fool to cry, but I'd 'a dropped a few tears if I hadn't blown 'em out through my nose.

And let me add, Bill, as I am taking one last look out of the car window, at the fast disappearing, familiar sights I have learned to love, like a native born—let me add, God never fashioned another such wondrous spot, on the entire surface of this old earth.

There is only one *real* land of sunshine and its out here where the sun goes down.

THE END.